

# Maryland Numismatist



## Israel's Medals of the Bet Alpha Zodiac Mosaic



***Annual Meeting Nov. 5 at 4 PM Whitman Expo***  
**Autumn, 2016 Volume 44 – No. 3**

**The  
Maryland  
State  
Numismatic  
Association,  
Inc.**



**The *MARYLAND NUMISMATIST*  
is the quarterly publication of  
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additional cost.**

**<http://mdstatenumisassn.org>**

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The Board of Directors of MSNA is composed of the officers, past presidents and club representatives as listed to the right.

\*\*\*\*\*

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\*\*\*\*\*

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## President's Message

In my President's message for the summer issue of *The Maryland Numismatist* I mentioned that the MSNA board would digitally photograph selections from the John B. Henry collection of Maryland tokens and colonial currency that MSNA acquired in 1984. As it turns out, the collection extends beyond Maryland material to include colonial currency issued by several of the original thirteen colonies, Continental (federal) currency, and Civil War patriotic tokens and store cards from many places. We recently began the process of photographing the Maryland colonial currency and store cards, and are gathering background information on the photographed items. In the coming months we will post a virtual educational exhibit on the MSNA website – then continue to add more items from the collection over time until we make the entire collection available for viewing and research.



It is again time to query our member clubs for recommendations to the MSNA Board on what the Board can or do to make the organization more relevant to the member clubs and members in general. The survey questionnaire that will be mailed or emailed to member clubs in the near future may be a page or two longer than the one we did a few years ago, but it will be easy to follow. I encourage each member club to respond. All recommendations, advice, and criticisms will be fully appreciated and considered by the MSNA Board. The goal of the survey is to simply provide insight to better serve the members.



Earlier this year, I promised myself to closely watch for the U.S. Mint release of the 2016 American Liberty Silver Medals. These 1-ounce .999 fine silver medals sold out on their August 23 launch day. Sales reached 24,400 of the allotted 25,000

within minutes. Of all the orders processed by the Mint that day for these medals, mine was not one of them. I'll eventually obtain an example, but I fell asleep at the switch on getting one from the Mint.

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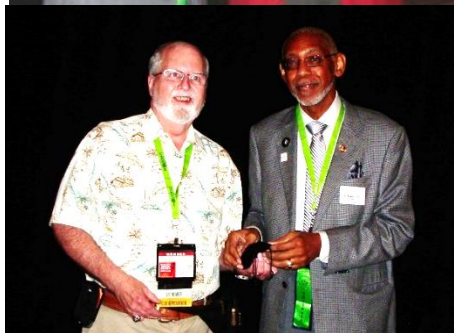


## American Numismatic Association Worlds' Fair of Money Report

MSNA members were in evidence at the ANA convention in Anaheim, California, held August 9 to 13. Total attendance topped 8,000 for the nearly week-long show.



Bryce Doxzon, the Secretary of MSNA since 1991, also active in the Maryland Tokens and Medals Society and Catonsville Coin Club, won ANA's Glen Smedley memorial award for his service to the ANA and local clubs. Bryce serves as the exhibit chairman for MSNA, the same position he served for the ANA 2003 and 2008 shows.



Donald Curtis, MSNA past president, received his twenty-fifth membership silver anniversary medal and pin at the ANA Members' Reception.



MSNA Treasurer and Editor Simcha Kuritzky placed four exhibits into competition. His Middle Eastern Redemption of the Firstborn ingots and his Dutch-Israel gold fantasy coin exhibits each took first place in class, while his feline elongated type set took second and Israel's gold coinage took third.





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## Why did Maryland Use Ninth and Third Dollars?

by Simcha Kuritzky, NLG

In 1984, Maryland collector and MSNA's first President John Henry bequeathed his collection of tokens and colonial bank notes to MSNA to exhibit and for research. A few years ago, MSNA board members and former presidents Donald Curtis and William Stratemeyer put the collection in new holders and inventoried the hundreds of historic pieces. President Jack Schadegg and Editor Simcha Kuritzky are now in the process of photographing the collection for display on the web.

While reviewing the notes in the John Henry collection, one cannot help but wonder why they use strange denominations like one-ninth dollar?



Maryland 8-14-1776

#49

1/9 of a Dollar Page 172

40,000 Issued

Signers:

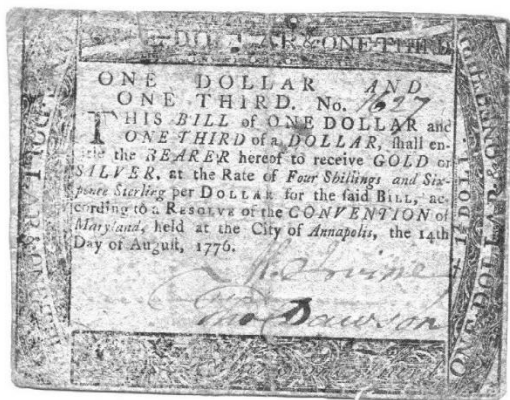
Thomas Gassaway

John Duckett

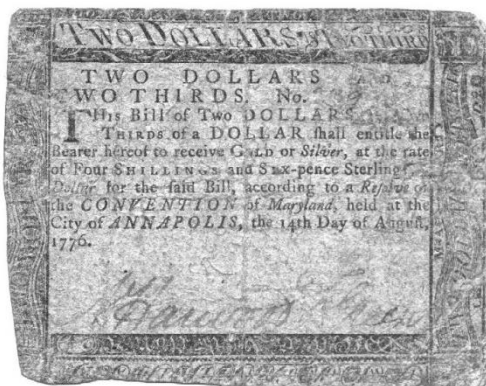
The answer is that the residents of British North America used two different monetary systems: British and Spanish. The British system used gold guineas and silver pounds (abbreviated £ for the Latin *lira*), shillings (s. or / which is an elongated S for *solidus*), and pence (d. for *denarius*). British silver coinage was scarce throughout the Eighteenth Century, but when issued, shillings contained just over 6 grams of sterling silver or .179 Troy ounces. Latin American mints produced 8 real coins that the British called Spanish milled dollars, and from 1732-



1771 they contained just over 27 grams of 11/12 fine silver (22 karat) or .798 Troy ounces. The actual number of shillings in a dollar were 4.46 (which would be written  $4\frac{5}{12}$ ), but to make computations easier, the Colonies used  $\frac{4}{6}$  (written in full in the middle part of the text on the face of the note). So the one-ninth dollar note shown on the previous page was 6d, one-third dollar was  $\frac{1}{6}$ , so the  $\frac{1}{3}$  note shown below was actually six shillings, and the  $\frac{2}{3}$  note below that is twelve shillings.



Maryland 8-14-1776 #51  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  of a Dollar Page 172  
 32,000 Issued  
Signers:  
 Thomas Dawson  
 Alexander Irvine



Maryland 8-14-1776 #48  
 $\frac{2}{3}$  of a Dollar Page 172  
 32,000 Issued Repaired  
Signers:  
 Nicholas Harwood



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## **58th CONVENTION & COIN SHOW September 23-25, 2016**

**Friday 10-6 - Saturday 10-6 - Sunday 10-4**

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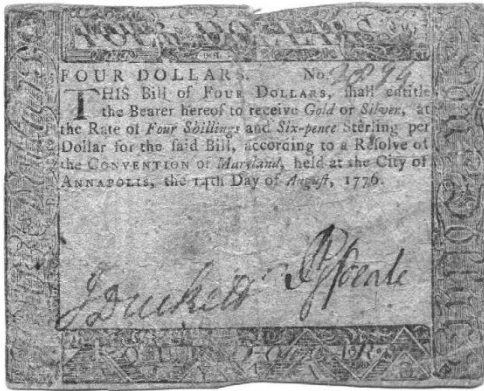
**early enrollment deadline July 29**

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**More information at:**     **[vnaonline.org](http://vnaonline.org) and**  
                                     **[fredericksburgexpocenter.com](http://fredericksburgexpocenter.com)**

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**Contact for exhibits:**     **Billy Hoovler**  
                                     **[billing@comm-spec.net](mailto:billing@comm-spec.net)**



Maryland 8-14-1776

#50

\$4.00 Page 172

16,000 Issued

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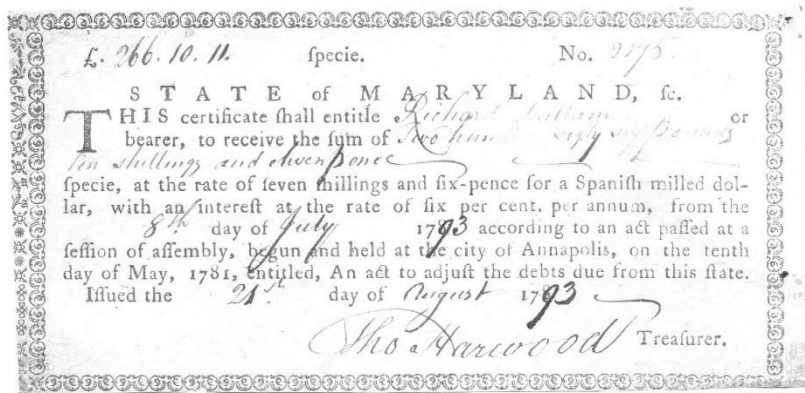
St. George Peale

John Ducket



Of course not all bills used fractional dollar denominations in order to get an integer number of shillings or pence. The note above was issued the same time as the one-ninth and one and one-third dollar notes, but bears the denomination four dollars. This would be 18 shillings, which is also £0.9 though no one back then would ever write it as a decimal. In the Eighteenth Century, Britain issued gold only as guineas, whose value in silver constantly changed. It was only in 1816 that its value was fixed at 21 shillings. The pound was a unit of account only that was based on the silver in 20 shillings.

Today we might think that one reason for declaring independence would be to get away from the awkward monetary system of Britain (based on 12 and 20) and the Spanish (based on powers of two), but once the Colonies turned into States they continued to use Spanish milled dollars, pounds, shillings, and pence. The French began developing the decimal metric system in 1789 which would soon include coinage and all other measures, including a ten-day week for the calendar. The U.S. planned a decimal coinage when the new Mint opened in the capital city of Philadelphia in 1792. However, as the receipt on the next page from 1793 shows, Maryland still used pounds, shillings, and pence for their accounts even after the introduction of federal coinage in cents, dismes (later dimes), dollars, and eagles.



The denomination is 266 pounds, 10 shillings, and 11 pence. What's also interesting is that the Spanish milled dollar is now tariffed at 7/6, so this receipt's face value is the equivalent of \$710.79. This note was issued to pay debts the State incurred, and it paid interest at the hefty rate of six percent annually.

Quantity of flour	Bush. wheat.	Bush. rye.	Bush. corn.	Montgomery County, to wit.
			<i>50 bushels</i>	I HEREBY certify, that I have taken into my possession, in virtue of the act of assembly, entitled, An act for the immediate supply of flour and other provisions for the army, the articles expressed in the margin, and the bearer hereof is entitled to receive from the state of Maryland the current market price on this day, with six per cent. interest thereon.
		<i>fourteen pounds four shillings and four pence</i>		
				Witness my hand, this <i>10th</i> day of <i>January</i> 1780.

Another interesting item in the collection is this receipt which was given to suppliers of the Revolutionary Army in Maryland. It is dated January, 1780, in the middle of the War, from Montgomery County (which had only been founded in 1776). It looks like it was issued in receipt of fifty bushels of corn (today called wheat), priced at eight pounds and four shillings each, for a total of £410. This indicates how low the Maryland pound had fallen, because at the same time in England, a bushel of wheat sold for a little over five shillings (from [www.johnhearfield.com/History/Breadt.htm](http://www.johnhearfield.com/History/Breadt.htm)). So there's a lot of interesting items in the John Henry collection, and I look forward to documenting more of it soon.

# **ANNAPOLIS COIN and CURRENCY SHOW**

**2016**

**2017**

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## Local News

MSNA's **annual meeting** will be held Saturday, November 5 at 4 PM in a meeting room at the Baltimore Convention Center during the Whitman Expo. All members and the public are invited to attend.

The **Washington Numismatic Society** held their semi-annual pot-luck dinner in June. In September, **Gerald Grzenda** will speak on Brazil's over three centuries of coinage in a delayed tribute to the Olympics.

The **Montgomery County Coin Club** hosted **Julian Leidman** for his annual "State of the Hobby" address. In July they held a bourse, giving members a chance to set up tables to buy, sell and trade coins. August had a review of the ANA show. In September, Scott Horne of the Institute for Scrap Recycling Industries will discuss mutilated coins, their redemption by the Treasury Department, abuses in the redemption program, and the problem of Chinese counterfeiting.

**Welcome returning member**

**#836 Joe Adam**

### **NANSON NUMISMATICS**

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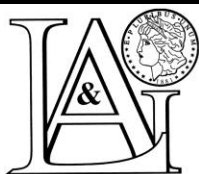
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### **Coin Club Meeting Calendar (most months)**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
First				Baltimore
Second	Cambridge, Colonial	Montgomery, Western Maryland	Belmar, Catonsville, Middle River	
Third	Colonial (some- times), Bel Mar	Washington Numis. Soc.		Baltimore
Fourth	Carroll County	Bowie	Middle River	MSNA Board

Member clubs, send us an email of your bulletin or activities so we can publish them in the Local News section of the journal.



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MSNA has a number of different encased quarters for sale. Order them from the editor, and either add \$1 for postage or pick them up at the Whitman Coin Expo.



To commemorate the bicentennial of the Battle of Baltimore, MSNA issued new encased Fort McHenry quarters in 2014. The quarters are from Philadelphia, Denver, and San Francisco mints. A set of all 3 mints (the encased design is the same) is \$10; a single P or D mint quarter is \$4; a single S mint is \$4.50.

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## What's Your Sign?

Part Thirty-Three: Israel's Bet Alpha Medals

by Simcha Kuritzky, NLG

While most of us associate astrology with the counter-culture movement of the 1960s, it was very important in the ancient world. The Babylonians worshipped the Heavenly Host, and the Greeks and Romans associated their gods with the various planets and constellations (many of those names are still used today). The twelve signs of the zodiac are a theme found in ancient artwork, even coins. So it should not be surprising that mosaics portraying the zodiac have been found in the ruins of synagogues from the period of the Roman Occupation (63 BCE to 638 CE), though some have claimed these are actually early churches.

One of the most famous such works of art is the mosaic of Helios in his chariot surrounded by the 12 signs of the zodiac (shown on the cover of this journal), found in the floor of a late Byzantine synagogue in Bet Alpha in the eastern Galilee, which was excavated starting in 1929. The signs are given in order with their Hebrew names, starting with טלה *Taleh* (Aries) at 3 o'clock, then proceed counter-clockwise around to דגים *Dagim* (Pisces). In the four corners are the angels of the four seasons.



This mosaic was chosen by Professor of Archeology Yigael Yadin as the central design for Israel's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary medals, issued in bronze 59mm, silver 45mm 1.4 ounce, and platinum 35mm 1 ounce in 1973. The bronze and silver medals are readily available though the platinum ones are scarce. Mintages are around 40,000 for the brass and silver and 10,000 for platinum, but many have been melted over the years. Since the

medal is round, it only includes the Helios center and the zodiac signs around and excludes the seasons in the corners. It also reconstructs the goat גדי *Gedi* (Capricorn) which is mostly obliterated in the original mosaic. The artwork is representational, almost primitive in its style. *Aryeh* (Leo) the lion, in particular, is poorly drawn, with no mane and a tail at an angle most real lions can't replicate.

**OCEAN CITY COIN and CURRENCY SHOW**  
**Ocean City (Roland E. Powell) Convention Center**  
**4001 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, Maryland**  
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**Sun - 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM**

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In 1984, Israel issued a set of twelve 19mm 3 gram .935 fine silver medals which each portray one of the signs on the obverse fitted to a circular frame with the set of twelve sigils surrounding. The name appears in Hebrew as it does on the mosaic, but not necessarily at the same location as in the original artwork, and the Latin name has been added. These medals were not sold in the U.S. and can be difficult to find. However, since they have less than one-tenth ounce of pure silver, when one does find them they tend to be quite affordable. I have managed to collect ten of the twelve medals.



An interesting point is that the signs in the original mosaic and the one on the common reverse start at 3 o'clock but the sigils on the obverse start at 9 o'clock. Both proceed counter-clockwise. These medals were usually sold in a silver bezel for use as jewelry. They are not listed in Haffner's work on Israel state medals, but they did come with a certificate of authenticity from the Israel Government Coins and Medals Corporation.



As an addendum, I am showing two other Israel zodiac medals (actually jewelry pieces) that probably won't fit into a future article in that they are one-of-a-kind pieces in my collection. The first is a large (46mm) bronze watch fob with a naked woman symbolizing the sign of Virgo. She holds a lily and stands between two trees. Above is **אלול** *Elul*, the Babylonian name for the month before the Autumnal Equinox that Jews adopted during the Babylonian exile around 25

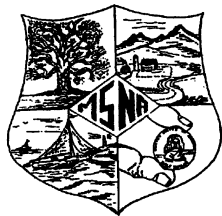
centuries ago. Although *Elul* usually begins in August, at least part of it will fall during the month September indicated at the bottom. The Greco-Roman zodiac assigns Virgo to August 23-September 22 (or thereabouts), however Jews have traditionally matched zodiac signs to entire lunar months.



The next medal is one that I just bought. It includes a nice rendition of the 12 zodiac signs on one side with the Latin names around a blue glass gem. They start with Aries at 2 o'clock and proceed clockwise. Although it is designed to look

like a medal in a bezel, it is all one piece—the top does not unscrew. On the other side are the twelve sigils for the zodiac starting with Aries at 10 o'clock and proceed counter-clockwise, so that the sigil should be precisely opposite of the sign on the other side of the medal. In the center in Hebrew is *Bezeq*, the name of Israel's telecommunications company founded in 1984 (which lost its monopoly in 1994), with National Employees' Association beneath.





**Maryland State Numismatic  
Association, Inc.  
P. O. Box 13504  
Silver Spring, MD 20911-3504**

*Dedicated to attaining knowledge and fulfillment in Numismatics*

## **Membership Application/Renewal**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ MSNA #: \_\_\_\_\_ (for renewal)

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor No. 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor No. 2: \_\_\_\_\_

For junior membership please include:

Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Fee of \$15 (club), \$10 (individual) or \$2 (under 18) must accompany this form for calendar year dues (\$5 individual after August 1). Life member upgrades are: \$300 for clubs, \$200 (age 50 & under), \$125 (51-65), \$75 (66 & over). You must be a regular member for 3 years before attaining life membership. Pay by check or money order.

# Maryland Coin Show Dates

All shows have free admission. Only the Whitman show does not have free parking.

**11 Sept. – Annapolis Coin and Currency Show**, Elks Lodge, 2 Pythian Drive, Edgewater, MD; 9-4:30.

**18 Sept. – Baltimore Friendly Monthly Stamp and Coin Show**, Pikesville Hilton, 1726 Reisterstown Rd (I-695 exit 20) Pikesville, MD; 10-4.

**30 Sept.-2 Oct. – CEO Coins, Currency & Treasures Ocean City Show**, Ocean City (Roland E. Powell) Convention Center, 4001 Ocean Highway & 40<sup>th</sup> Street, Ocean City, MD; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4.

**7-8 Oct. – Battlefield Coin Show**, Grange Hall, 1 South 8th Alley, New Market, MD; 9:30-4:30.

**15 Oct. – Maryland Token and Medal Society (MTAMS)** semi-annual swap meet at Grace United Methodist Church, Northern Parkway and Charles St. Baltimore. noon-3PM. Open to the public, but table holders must be members. Contact Ed Craig 410-284-8382 for tables.

**16 Oct. – Hunt Valley Coin and Currency Show**, Holiday Inn, 9615 Deereco Road, Lutherville-Timonium, MD; 9-4.

**23 Oct. – Westminster Coin and Currency Show**, Westminster Fire Hall, 28 John Street, Westminster, MD; 9-4:30.

**3-6 Nov. – Whitman Baltimore Coin & Currency Convention**, Baltimore Convention Center, 1 West Pratt Street; Thu 2-6, Fri-Sat 10-6, Sun. 10-3. *MSNA will hold its annual meeting on Saturday at 4 PM.*

**12-13 Nov. – Frederick Coin and Currency Show**, Elk Lodge #684, 289 Willowdale Drive, Frederick, MD; 9-4:30.

**13 Nov. – Middle River Coin Club Show**, Victory Villa Community Center, Martin Blvd & Compass Road, Baltimore, MD; 10-3.

**18-19 Nov. – Battlefield Coin Show**, Grand Venice Hotel, 431 Dual Highway, Hagerstown, MD. Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4.

**27 Nov. – Annapolis Coin and Currency Show**, Elks Lodge, 2 Pythian Drive, Edgewater, MD; 9-4:30.

**18 Dec. – Hunt Valley Coin and Currency Show**, Holiday Inn, 9615 Deereco Road, Lutherville-Timonium, MD; 9-4.

## MEMBER CLUBS IN GOOD STANDING (\* denotes charter)

Western Maryland Coin Club* 662 Greene Street, Suite 2 Cumberland, MD 21502	Baltimore Coin Club * P. O. Box 43681 Baltimore, MD 21236 (410) 284-8382	Belmar Coin Club * 444 Robinhood Road Havre de Grace, MD 21078 ScottSchu@gmail.com
Bowie Coin Club P. O. Box 913 Bowie, MD 20718-0913 bowiecoinclub.com bowiecoinclub@verizon.net	Cambridge Coin Club P. O. Box 932 Cambridge, MD 21613 umesgrad@fastol.com	Carroll County Coin Club* c/o Lester A. White 10 West Main Street Westminster, MD 21157 Les.white.1@juno.com
Catonsville Coin Club * P. O. Box 3273 Baltimore, MD 21228-0273 beedolf33@gmail.com	Colonial Coin Club * P. O. Box 884 Annapolis, MD 21401 bettymeck@aol.com	Harford Coin Huskers* P. O. Box 34 Fork, MD 21051
Maryland Numismatic Society P. O. Box 681 Riderwood, MD 21139	Maryland Token & Medal Society / P. O. Box 3273 Baltimore, MD 21228-0273 mdtams.org beedolf33@gmail.com	Montgomery County Coin Club P. O. Box 13504 Silver Spring, MD 20911 montgomerycoinclub.org
Middle River Coin Club * c/o Baltimore County Dept. of Recreation & Parks Victory Villa Community Ctr 404 Compass Road Baltimore, MD 21220	South Glen Burnie Coin Club c/o Darrel King 8017 Clark Station Road Seyern, MD 21144 sgbcc.com	St. Maries Coin Club P. O. Box 365 Lusby, MD 20657 smcc.anaclubs.org stmariescoinclub@comcast.net
	Washington Numismatic Society P. O. Box 13504 Silver Spring, MD 20911 wns.anaclubs.org Simcha.Kuritzky@cgi.com	

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